

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF WISCONSIN

GILBERT M. HINOJOSA,

Plaintiff,

v.

Case No. 24-cv-1153-pp

CHRISTOPHER SCHMALING,

Defendant.

**ORDER GRANTING PLAINTIFF'S MOTION FOR LEAVE TO PROCEED
WITHOUT PREPAYING FILING FEE (Dkt. No. 2) AND SCREENING
COMPLAINT UNDER 28 U.S.C. §1915A**

Plaintiff Gilbert M. Hinojosa, who is incarcerated at Stanley Correctional Institution and is representing himself, filed a complaint under 42 U.S.C. §1983, alleging that the defendant violated his constitutional rights. This decision resolves the plaintiff's motion for leave to proceed without prepaying the filing fee, dkt. no. 2, and screens his complaint, dkt. no. 1.

**I. Motion for Leave to Proceed without Prepaying the Filing Fee
(Dkt. No. 2)**

The Prison Litigation Reform Act (PLRA) applies to this case because the plaintiff was incarcerated when he filed his complaint. See 28 U.S.C. §1915(h). The PLRA lets the court allow an incarcerated plaintiff to proceed with his case without prepaying the civil case filing fee. 28 U.S.C. §1915(a)(2). When funds exist, the plaintiff must pay an initial partial filing fee. 28 U.S.C. §1915(b)(1). He then must pay the balance of the \$350 filing fee over time, through deductions from his prisoner account. Id.

On September 13, 2024, the court ordered the plaintiff to pay an initial partial filing fee of \$26.34. Dkt. No. 5. The court received that fee on October 16, 2024. The court will grant the plaintiff's motion for leave to proceed without prepaying the filing fee and will require him to pay remainder of the filing fee over time in the manner explained at the end of this order.

II. Screening the Complaint

A. Federal Screening Standard

Under the PLRA, the court must screen complaints brought by incarcerated persons seeking relief from a governmental entity or officer or employee of a governmental entity. 28 U.S.C. §1915A(a). The court must dismiss a complaint if the incarcerated plaintiff raises claims that are legally “frivolous or malicious,” that fail to state a claim upon which relief may be granted, or that seek monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief. 28 U.S.C. §1915A(b).

In determining whether the complaint states a claim, the court applies the same standard that it applies when considering whether to dismiss a case under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6). See Cesal v. Moats, 851 F.3d 714, 720 (7th Cir. 2017) (citing Booker-El v. Superintendent, Ind. State Prison, 668 F.3d 896, 899 (7th Cir. 2012)). To state a claim, a complaint must include “a short and plain statement of the claim showing that the pleader is entitled to relief.” Fed. R. Civ. P. 8(a)(2). The complaint must contain enough facts, accepted as true, to “state a claim for relief that is plausible on its face.” Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009) (quoting Bell Atlantic Corp. v.

Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 570 (2007)). “A claim has facial plausibility when the plaintiff pleads factual content that allows a court to draw the reasonable inference that the defendant is liable for the misconduct alleged.” Id. (citing Twombly, 550 U.S. at 556).

To state a claim for relief under 42 U.S.C. §1983, a plaintiff must allege that someone deprived him of a right secured by the Constitution or the laws of the United States, and that whoever deprived him of this right was acting under the color of state law. D.S. v. E. Porter Cnty. Sch. Corp., 799 F.3d 793, 798 (7th Cir. 2015) (citing Buchanan-Moore v. County of Milwaukee, 570 F.3d 824, 827 (7th Cir. 2009)). The court construes liberally complaints filed by plaintiffs who are representing themselves and holds such complaints to a less stringent standard than pleadings drafted by lawyers. Cesal, 851 F.3d at 720 (citing Perez v. Fenoglio, 792 F.3d 768, 776 (7th Cir. 2015)).

B. The Plaintiff’s Allegations

The plaintiff was confined at the Racine County Jail during the events described in the complaint. He alleges that on November 21, 2021, he sent a request to see medical staff because he had pain radiating from his molar and had been bleeding from his gums for over two weeks. Dkt. No. 1 at 2. The plaintiff alleges that from November 21, 2021 until May 2023, he never was seen by medical staff. Id. During that time, he allegedly asked multiple staff members, including CO Lopez, CO Fonseca, CO Hernandez, Sgt. Noona and Sgt. Koonez, to call medical but they responded, “medical know[s] [and] they’ll call you down when they call you.” Id. at 2-3. The plaintiff states that he was

never called down. *Id.* at 3. He alleges that on November 26, 2021, he pulled out his molar on his own without any pain medication. *Id.* He states that he still wasn't seen by medical staff and reiterates that he received no response until May 2023. *Id.*

The plaintiff states that he tried to exhaust his administrative remedies, but that the kiosk wasn't working properly. *Id.* He allegedly talked to the captain, lieutenants and sergeants and they responded that they would look into it. *Id.*

The plaintiff alleges that on July 22, 2022, his tooth was taken from his cell in a cell search. *Id.* at 3-4. He says that he requested copies of the video and/or photos of it and was told that he could not have copies until he was released from prison. *Id.* at 4.

For relief, the plaintiff seeks compensatory damages. *Id.* at 5.

C. Analysis

The court assumes that the plaintiff was a pretrial detainee during the events described in the complaint because he was incarcerated at the Racine County Jail. A §1983 claim that a state pretrial detainee has received inadequate medical care is predicated on the rights secured by the Fourteenth Amendment's Due Process Clause. *James v. Hale*, 959 F.3d 307, 318 (7th Cir. 2020) (citing *Miranda v. County of Lake*, 900 F.3d 335, 346-47 (7th Cir. 2018)). Claims of inadequate medical care while in pretrial detention are subject to an objective reasonableness standard. *Id.* (citing *Miranda*, 900 F.3d at 352). The plaintiff bears the burden to demonstrate objective unreasonableness, and he

must make a two-part showing. *Id.* First, he must show that the defendants acted purposefully, knowingly or recklessly when considering the consequences of their response to the medical condition at issue in the case. *Id.* (citing McCann v. Ogle County, Ill., 909 F.3d 881, 886 (7th Cir. 2018)). Second, the plaintiff must show that the challenged conduct was objectively unreasonable given the totality of the relevant facts and circumstances. *Id.*

The plaintiff's allegations—that he sought help for his painful and harmful tooth condition but received no response or treatment for about eighteen months—implicate his constitutional rights. But the plaintiff has sued only Racine County Sheriff Christopher Schmaling, and he has not alleged that Schmaling had any involvement in the events described in his complaint. That means that the complaint does not state a claim.

The court will give the plaintiff an opportunity to file an amended complaint. To the extent that the plaintiff wants to sue persons in their individual capacities, he must include their names in the caption of the complaint and, to hold them liable under 42 U.S.C. §1983, he must describe their personal involvement in the events described in the complaint. Section 1983 limits liability to public employees who are personally responsible for a constitutional violation. Burks v. Raemisch, 555 F.3d 592, 595-96 (7th Cir. 2009). In order to be liable, the individual defendant must have caused or participated in a constitutional violation. Hildebrandt v. Ill. Dep't of Nat. Res., 347 F.3d 1014, 1039 (7th Cir. 2003). Regarding supervisors, the personal responsibility requirement is satisfied if the constitutional deprivation occurs at

the supervisor's direction or with the supervisor's knowledge and consent. *Id.*

In other words, the supervisor "must know about the conduct and facilitate it, approve it, condone it, or turn a blind eye." *Id.* (quoting Gentry v. Duckworth, 65 F.3d 555, 561 (7th Cir. 1995)).

The court is enclosing a copy of its amended complaint form. The plaintiff must use this form for his amended complaint. See Civil Local Rule 9(b). (E.D. Wis.). The plaintiff must list the case number for this case on the first page. He must list all the defendants he wants to sue in the caption of the amended complaint. He should use the spaces on pages two and three to explain the key facts that give rise to the claims he wishes to bring, and to describe which defendants he believes committed the violations that relate to each claim. If there is not enough space on those pages, the plaintiff may use up to five additional sheets of paper, double-spaced so that the court can read them. The amended complaint takes the place of the prior complaint and must be complete in itself; the plaintiff may not refer the court or other readers back to facts in the previous complaint.

When writing his amended complaint, the plaintiff should provide the court with enough facts to answer the following questions: 1) Who violated his constitutional rights?; 2) What did each person do to violate his rights?; 3) Where did each person violate his rights?; and 4) When did each person violate his rights? The amended complaint does not need to be long or contain legal language or citations to statutes or cases, but it does need to provide the court

and each defendant with notice of what each defendant allegedly did or did not do to violate his rights.

III. Conclusion

The court **GRANTS** the plaintiff's motion for leave to proceed without prepaying the filing fee. Dkt. No. 2.

The court **CONCLUDES** that the complaint fails to state a claim. Dkt. No. 1.

The court **ORDERS** that the plaintiff may file an amended complaint that complies with the instructions in this order. If the plaintiff chooses to file an amended complaint, he must do so in time for the court to receive it by **January 3, 2025**. If the court receives an amended complaint by the end of the day on January 3, 2025, the court will screen the amended complaint as required by 28 U.S.C. §1915A. If the court does not receive either an amended complaint or a request for more time to file one by the January 3, 2025 deadline, the court will dismiss this case based on the plaintiff's failure to state a claim in his original complaint and will issue him a strike as required by 28 U.S.C. §1915(g).

The court **ORDERS** that the agency that has custody of the plaintiff must collect from his institution trust account the **\$323.66** balance of the filing fee by collecting monthly payments from the plaintiff's prison trust account in an amount equal to 20% of the preceding month's income credited to the plaintiff's trust account and forwarding payments to the Clerk of Court each time the amount in the account exceeds \$10 in accordance with 28 U.S.C. §1915(b)(2).

The agency must clearly identify the payments by the case name and number. If the plaintiff transfers to another county, state or federal institution, the transferring institution must forward a copy of this order, along with the plaintiff's remaining balance, to the receiving institution.

The court will send a copy of this order to the Warden of Stanley Correctional Institution, where the plaintiff is confined.

The court **ORDERS** that plaintiffs who are incarcerated at Prisoner E-Filing Program institutions¹ must submit all correspondence and case filings to institution staff, who will scan and e-mail documents to the court. Plaintiffs who are incarcerated at all other prison facilities must submit the original document for each filing to the court to the following address:

Office of the Clerk
United States District Court
Eastern District of Wisconsin
362 United States Courthouse
517 E. Wisconsin Avenue
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202

DO NOT MAIL ANYTHING DIRECTLY TO THE JUDGE'S CHAMBERS. It will only delay the processing of the case.

The court advises the plaintiff that if he fails to file documents or take other required actions by the deadlines the court sets, the court may dismiss the case based on his failure to diligently pursue it. The parties must notify the Clerk of Court of any change of address. The court advises the plaintiff that it

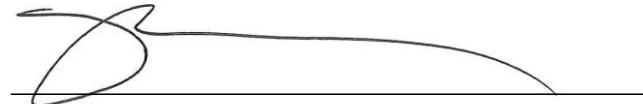
¹ The Prisoner E-Filing Program is mandatory for all individuals incarcerated at Green Bay Correctional Institution, Waupun Correctional Institution, Dodge Correctional Institution, Wisconsin Secure Program Facility, Columbia Correctional Institution, and Oshkosh Correctional Institution.

is his responsibility to promptly notify the court if he is released from custody or transferred to a different institution. The plaintiff's failure to keep the court advised of his address may result in the court dismissing this case without further notice.

The court will include a guide prepared by court staff to address common questions that arise in cases filed by prisoners. Entitled "Answers to Prisoner Litigants' Common Questions," this guide contains information that the plaintiff may find useful in prosecuting his case.

Dated in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, this 3rd day of December, 2024.

BY THE COURT:



HON. PAMELA PEPPER
Chief United States District Judge